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WOLF CREEK FARMS
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

OFFICIAL NAME: Wolf Creek Farms

LOCATION: On 8 scattered tracts in Grady county, southwestern Georgia about 5 miles east of Cairo, project headquarters.

HISTORY OF PROJECT: Begun by the Georgia Rural Rehabilitation Corporation under the Federal Emergency Relief Administration in 1934 to provide destitute sharecroppers and tenants with small farms for subsistence. The project was transferred to the Resettlement Administration in 1936, at which time, farms were staked out and construction of homes and outbuildings continued. The project was taken over by the Farm Security Administration the following year. Construction was completed and repairs made to the 9 houses built by the Georgia Rural Rehabilitation Corporation. The original plan of using only the cleared space on the tracts for farming was modified. Wooded areas were cleared for full-time farming.

PURPOSE OF PROJECT: To provide farmers who could not obtain credit elsewhere and who were on the rehabilitation program of the Farm Security Administration with adequate farms on long-term rentals. With the assistance of farm and home plans and technical guidance, homesteaders were given an opportunity to attain independence and security.

ECONOMIC PLAN OF OPERATION: Twenty-four farm units have been established on the 2,249 acres of half-rolling, half-level project land. Some drainage and terracing was necessary after the land was cleared, before cultivation was practicable.

Situated in the heart of a truck-growing area, homesteaders follow a diversified program of farming for both their subsistence and cash crops,which include pickles, pecans, peanuts, cotton, tobacco, okra and collards.

In addition to truck crops, poultry and hogs are sold for cash income. Income from tobacco and cotton is relatively small.

Each family has a fenced garden, fenced yard and a permanent fenced pasture of about 10 acres which is supplemented by temporary grazing crops. The gardens furnish green vegetables the year round and a surplus for canning. Families on the project canned 50 percent more garden crops in 1938 than they had the year before. All of the homesteaders have chickens and hogs and one to three milch cows.

Each farm unit includes a five or six-room frame house wired for electricity, a barn, poultry house, smoke house and sanitary privy. Two of the farms have tobacco barns and hog houses are located on 18 other farms.

Community activities consist mainly of group meetings. The children participate in 4-H club work and the women on the project have organized a Woman's Club. The Woman's Club meetings stress practical home demonstrations.

Schools are nearby and children are transported to and from school by bus.

HOMESTEADERS: The collapse of cotton prices made destitute the tenants and sharecroppers in this section who for years had farmed under a one-crop system. The families accepted on the project had no way of obtaining credit or aid from any other source. The following is a typical case:

William Smith is 33 years old; his wife, twenty-nine. They have three children aged seven, three and two. Smith was a sharecropper and he reports that, "Back in the old days, Mister So and So only came into my field twice the first year, twice the second year, and once the third." In 1933, he was offered a farm to rent, if he could supply the tools and workstock and his own provisions for the winter. He did not have money enough to swing this, so he didn't get the farm. In 1934, he worked at odd jobs and had to go on relief part of the time. In 1935, he was accepted on the rehabilitation program of the Farm Security Administration, although he had nothing to offer except his farming experience.

Once on the program, he was able to buy a mule and a pressure cooker. Three years later, when he was established at Wolf Creek Farms, he paid over $300 to the Government as part-payment on what he had borrowed and for his land rental. While on the project,he dug 17 stumps out of his front yard, working nights and early morning, made $600 out of two and a half acres of tobacco, raised hogs, chickens and a cow, and has grown tomatoes, okra, sea island cotton and tobacco.

Smith's record from the time he was accepted on the rehabilitation program shows a marked change from previous years. In 1935, he paid back all but $4.00 of the original loan; in 1936, he borrowed $208 and repaid $44; in 1937, he borrowed $135, repaid $215. In 1938, his first year on the project, he borrowed $220 and repaid $210. In 1939, he borrowed $220.

Smith owes a balance of approximately $70, but his inventory shows that he now owns $25 worth of machinery, a mule, two cows, one calf, two sows, household goods and crops of corn, hay, peanuts, and oats which total about $500.

In 1933, he couldn't rent a farm because he didn't have "the furnish".

July 1, 1939